

MATURE ENTREPRENEURS

# 'AN EXCITING TIME'



Record-Eagle/Jan-Michael Stump

Grand Traverse Pavilions Administrator and CEO Kory Hansen stands in the former dental clinic of what used to be Grand Traverse County Health Services building on Garfield Road.

## *It's a new day for Grand Traverse senior care*

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**T**RAVERSE CITY — Kory Hansen walks through the old Grand Traverse County Health Department building on Garfield Road North and sees the future of northern Michigan senior care before him.

Hansen, chief executive officer of the

county's senior residential care facility — the Grand Traverse Pavilions — pays little attention to the empty rooms and old dental clinic equipment that protrude from the floor of the aging health district building.

He instead sees what's ahead: a vibrant center that allows the elderly to live at home, as opposed to moving into a nursing care facility.

"People will be able to stay at home as long as possible, and they will still receive a higher level of care," Hansen said.

Hansen is describing plans to transform the old county health building into a PACE Center, or Program of All Inclusive Care for the Elderly. A PACE center is a novel concept in the nursing home world that

**SEE CARE PAGE 4B**

# CARE

*It's a new day  
for GT seniors*

**FROM PAGE 1B**

congregates nurses, doctors, therapists, aid providers and any other professional services for seniors under one roof—in this case the old county health building.

Then, instead of moving seniors into the building or a place like the Pavilions for full-time nursing home residency, fragile seniors who need extensive care are bused to the center for services, then driven back home. They get all their medical treatment, therapy and other services in one stop at the PACE center, then get to sleep in their own bed at night.

"It's the way the industry is heading," Hansen said. "From the consumer's standpoint, as the boomers age, no one wants to go into a nursing home. But there comes a point where they have to. Former generations accepted it, but the newer generations want to stay in their homes as long as possible."

PACE centers target people who can't afford private nursing home care. Medicaid or Medicare pay the bills, but an individual who wants to pay personally can also access the services. The centers are proven to save taxpayer dollars. They reduce hospitalizations of the elderly by more than 40 percent and also reduce senior trips to multiple doctor offices.

"A geriatric clinical team offering state of the art medical service at one center with a holistic approach that looks at mind body and spirit," said Sarah Vollink, a community outreach director for two PACE centers in Battle Creek and Kalamazoo called CentraCare. "At the same time the senior gets to live where they want to and age in place in the community."

Vollink said the PACE centers offer care for seniors "at half the cost of nursing home care."

Shawn Bloom, chief executive officer of the National PACE Association, said seniors' family members benefit and government does, as well. The savings cut 20 to 30 percent from traditional nursing home care costs.

"From the standpoint of the consumer, it brings a really simplified approach to care centered in the community," Bloom said. "Many family members are burdened by coordinating all the physician visits, trips to the drug store, rehabili-

tation services, Medicare billing. It all becomes very overwhelming for most families and PACE seamlessly integrates all of it."

Cheryl Young, bureau chief of Medicaid programs for Florida's Department of Elder Affairs, said PACE has worked well in the Sunshine state.

"The thing that sets apart the most is its ability to coordinate the care across Medicaid and Medicare," Young said.

A proposed lease agreement between the county and the Pavilions calls for the Pavilions to pay the county \$500,000 over a 20-year period to use the building. The Pavilions also will pay to replace the building's roof, with the price for that work deducted from future lease payments.

Herb Lemcool, chairman of the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners, toured PACE facilities in Grand Rapids and Muskegon. He has no doubt a PACE center here is in the best interests of county residents.